

To the Rural District Council of St. Columb Major.

ANNUAL REPORT, 1925.

Gentlemen,

Herewith I beg to submit to you my Twenty-seventh Annual Report on the health and sanitary condition of your district during the year 1925.

The District has an area of 73,270 acres, 3,119 inhabited houses, and a population estimated in 1925 of 11,870, an increase over 1924 of 20.

The number of children born during the year 1925 was 211, viz., 119 boys and 92 girls, giving a Birth Rate per 1,000 per annum of 17.78 on a population of 11,870, against 18.3 for England and Wales.

There were 5 illegitimate births recorded, as compared with 11 for 1924.

The Births for last year were 204 and Rate 17.08.

DEATH RATE.---During the year there were 140 Deaths in the District, 60 males and 80 females; and in addition to these there were 13 deaths of St. Columb residents in Public Institutions outside the District, so that the net deaths belonging to the District total 153 and Rate 12.88; giving a natural increase of population by excess of births over deaths of 58.

The deaths of Children of less than one year totalled 10, an equivalent Infantile Mortality Rate of 47.34. The Infant Mortality Rate for 1924 was 68.96 per 1,000 registered births. A decrease of 4 this year when compared with 1924. This compares favourably with the rate given for England and Wales, which was 75.

The most important contributory causes to this favourable Infantile Mortality is the increase in hygienic knowledge, due in part to Health Visitors, and the substitution in many cases of dried milk for fluid milk; the former plays an important part in the reduction of Infant Diarrhoea, which has been remarkably free from the District for the past few years.

Of the 10 Infants who succumbed in the first year of life, 2 died from Premature Birth, 2 from Gastric Enteritis, 3 from Broncho Pneumonia, 1 from Cellulitis of Leg, 1 from Congenital Heart, and 1 from Convulsions.

At the other extremes of life, 75 of the total deaths were those of persons over 65 years of age, and of these 41 died between 70 and 80, 26 were over 80, and 3 over 90.

The chief causes of Death were as follows:---

Pulmonary Tuberculosis	.. 6	Heart Disease	.. 14	Cerebral Haemorrhage	8
Other Tuberculous Disease	2	Bronchitis	.. 16	Arterio-Sclerosis	13
Cancer	.. 16	Pneumonia	.. 10	Chronic Nephritis	.. 6

Though there is a slight diminution in the number of deaths from Cancer, the reduction being 1 for the year, the incidence of the disease every year in the District is indeed appalling and most disquieting. It has been suggested that an Educational Campaign to disseminate knowledge about Cancer, as in operation in America, might be attempted. It is reported that the American Society's efforts have resulted in nothing but good. The measures adopted, however, were said to be rather sensational and might produce panic in this Country.

Many cases of Carcinoma are curable by operation, and if the general public could be taught to regard surgical interference not as a last resource, but as the proper treatment of Cancer as soon as detected, many precious lives would be saved.

By the education of the public the Death Rate from Cancer could be reduced. Instruction should be given to all Public Health Authorities as to the way in which education on the Cancer problem is to be broadcasted.

RESPIRATORY DISEASES.---During the year 1925 Bronchitis and Pneumonia have been responsible for 26 deaths and other Respiratory Diseases produced a fatal issue in 6 cases.

The rapid variations in our climatic conditions, and the long periods of cold, wet and windy weather, have undoubtedly played their part in lessening the powers of resistance of our people to the inroads of disease, and the lack of the sun's microbic destroying rays increases the incidence of and Death Rate of these diseases.

PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS (CONSUMPTION).---The deaths from Tuberculosis of the respiratory system number 6, two less than for last year, or 0.50 per 1,000 of the population. There were also 2 Non Pulmonary.

As I have repeatedly stated in my Annual Reports, the Housing question is at the root of the Pulmonary Tuberculosis problem, and plays a large part in combating the disease.

There are many houses still standing which should be razed to the ground, and there is a scarcity in all parts of the District.

There is no provision of accommodation for advanced Tuberculosis, and there appears to be no question that the advanced Consumptive, discharging large masses of virulent organisms, housed in dark, crowded and ill-ventilated tenements, is a great danger, and particularly to young children.

It is to be hoped that with the remarkable advances your Council have made in the sanitary condition of the District during the past few years, coupled with the introduction of the Artificial Light and X Ray treatment at the several centres, that a very appreciable diminution of this scourge will take place in the near future.

ZYMOTIC DISEASES.---The year 1925 has been particularly free from Infectious Diseases, and, excluding Tuberculosis, there were only 13 cases notified, compared with 21 for 1924.

The Notifications recorded were as follows :---

Measles	..	2	Pulmonary Tuberculosis	..	16
Scarlet Fever	..	2	Non Pulmonary Do.	..	2
Pauperal Fever	.	1	Pneumonia	.	3
Encephalitis Lethargica	2		Erycipelas	..	1

The usual routine after notification was followed.

DRAINAGE.---Very important work of this kind has been carried out during the year 1925. 38 Drains were constructed, 25 repaired and 37 cleaned.

But I regret to say that the unsatisfactory conditions that obtain in the way of drainage at Newlyn East is still very bad. This little village calls most urgently for attention in this matter; there is no system of drainage whatever in operation, as you are aware from my many previous reports.

HOUSING (INSPECTION OF THE DISTRICT) REGULATIONS.

Premises Inspected	..	877
Number of Licensed Slaughter-houses	..	20
Number of Inspections	93
Cowsheds, Dairies and Milkshops :—		
Number of Purveyors on Register	115
Number of Inspections	230
Number of Premises Disinfected	..	9
Number of Offensive Accumulations Removed	..	17
Closets Constructed	33
Earth Closets converted to Water Closets	..	28
Notices Served :—Preliminary	46
Statutory	24
Workshops :—Number on Register	.	29
Number of Visits	29
Number of New Dwelling-houses Erected	..	87
With State Assistance under the Housing Acts, 1923-24		53
Number of Dwellings (Temporary 3 years License)	..	11

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.---29 Workshops and 2 Factories were inspected and found satisfactory.

ISOLATION HOSPITAL.---No case of Infectious Disease was admitted to the Isolation Hospital at Castle-andinas during the year 1925. In fact, there were only 2 cases of Measles and 2 of Scarlet Fever notified, and the cases were particularly mild and satisfactorily segregated in their own homes.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES ---Serious cases of overcrowding are still very prevalent in the District, and I must again reiterate that the accommodation for the Working Classes is totally inadequate, and until suitable houses are provided the eradication of Consumption cannot be expected.

It is to be hoped that the Council will continue as in the past to build suitable houses for the Working Classes, at as reasonable a rent as possible.

Some of the inhabitants in the District are living under the worst possible conditions, being housed in old and defective buildings with very small rooms, badly lit and badly ventilated, conditions generally that are injurious to health.

The old bothies of mud and stone should be razed to the ground and suitable cottages erected in their stead, fit for heroes to live in, at a rent the poorest can pay.

SCAVENGING.---In St. Columb Town a man is appointed by the Council, who devotes the whole of his time to this very useful and indispensable function. Domestic refuse is removed regularly twice a week, and pail closets (of which there are very few) the same. The town refuse is deposited on tips which are far away from any habitation.

There are no insanitary Ashpits or Ashbins in the District.

For the prevention of the spread of Typhoid and Diarrhoea, any means of lessening the accumulation of house refuse is of extreme importance, and inhabitants with a view to this should make serious efforts to lessen the amount of vegetable matter by burning the same at the back of the fire.

WATER SUPPLY.---The provision and subsequent supervision of a pure water supply for the inhabitants is one of the most important duties which pertain to the Council.

The water in St. Columb Town is excellent in quality and has never been impeached, and is pronounced to be quite adequate for the town's requirements.

Some restrictions are placed on the use in the summer season during drought, as some householders, whose intelligence may be somewhat circumscribed, give no thought as to its conservation.

The Council do not incur the expenditure required for ascertaining periodically the quality of certain waters by chemical and bacteriological analysis, but when through illness or any other cause suspicion is cast on any particular supply, a sample of the suspected water is analysed, and if found impure, steps are taken to remove the source of pollution or procure another supply.

I have received no complaints of insufficiency from other parts of the District.

The majority of the Rural Cottages are supplied from wells, some have pumps attached, others with windless and bucket. The sources of supply are in most instances quite above suspicion.

DAIRIES.---The Dairies have been regularly visited and the majority found satisfactory. The number of Purveyors on Register is 115.

It is probably no exaggeration to say that there is no more pressing or vitally important question at the present time than the adequate provision of a clean milk supply throughout the District.

The wider use of dried milks in place of raw Cow's milk plays a most important part in the reduction of Infant Diarrhoea, which is so infrequent now, and until fluid milk can be supplied in as clean and pure a condition as dried milk its use as an Infant food is fraught with danger, and unless reliance can be put in the cleanliness of fluid milk, it is unjustifiable to prescribe it for Infant feeding.

VACCINATION.---I feel I must again this year sound a note of warning that the number of children totally unprotected against Small Pox is grossly increasing in the District, owing to the neglect of Vaccination due to the exemption facilities.

It is almost heart breaking for those who are in charge of the public health that persons will not avail themselves of what we undoubtedly have in Vaccination, a perfect protection against this loathsome disease.

The total Births for 1925 was	..	211
Successfully Vaccinated	..	60
Declarations of Objection	..	108
Died Unvaccinated	8
Cases unaccounted for	..	35
		<hr/>
		211
		<hr/>
		211

Before concluding my report, I wish to record my knowledge of the assiduous and untiring attention with which the Sanitary Inspector, Mr. Oxland, has carried out his duties, which are not always of an agreeable nature.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

Sutherland McMahon,

Medical Officer of Health.

St. Columb,
April 12th, 1926.

